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March 4, 2010

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**"Louisiana families have to live on a budget, and so should their government,"** said Rep. Melancon

**." "We will never get out of this fiscal hole unless we start making tough decisions and cut spending." As a former small businessman, I know you won't be in business very long if you spend more than you have." The government needs to live by the same rules so future generations aren't saddled with the debt we leave behind."**

Since his election to Congress, Congressman Melancon has worked as part of the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition to reduce the national debt and balance the budget. In February, Congressman Melancon helped pass into law pay-as-you-go (PAYGO) legislation, a critical step towards restoring our nation's fiscal health that requires all new spending be paid for. The fiscal discipline imposed by PAYGO in the 1990s was critical in taking the United States from deficits to surpluses, and the Blue Dogs have worked to reinstate statutory PAYGO since it was allowed to expire in 2002.

**"The Pay-As-You-Go law we passed earlier this year is a good first step toward halting out-of-control government spending." A Balanced Budget Amendment will further put us on a path to finally paying down the national debt and creating a stronger economic future for our children."**

Specifically, the *Balanced Budget Amendment* would:

- Require Congress to produce a balanced budget every fiscal year.
- Require the President to submit a balanced budget in his or her annual transmission to Congress.
- Protect Social Security benefits, ensuring that our most vulnerable are not subject to a reduction in their guaranteed benefits when they need them the most.

Prohibit outlays for a fiscal year from exceeding total receipts for that fiscal year unless Congress, by a three-fifths roll call vote of each House, authorizes a specific excess of outlays over receipts (in cases of emergencies, for instance).

Forty-nine states currently require an annual balanced budget, and an amendment to the Constitution will finally hold the federal government to the same, commonsense standard.

For a Constitutional amendment to become law, two-thirds of both houses of Congress must pass the amendment. After passage, three-fourths (or 38) of the states must agree to the amendment by either approving it through their legislatures or by a ratifying convention. The Balanced Budget Amendment sets the time period for state ratification at seven years.

The last time a balanced budget amendment was seriously considered was 1995, when it passed the House but failed by a single vote in the Senate.

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